

*THE CHURCH AT HOME.***The Sabbath-schools of the Church of Scotland.**

By the last Annual Report there are in connection with our 1215 churches and chapels, 1746 Sabbath-schools in active operation. These schools were taught by 11,450 teachers. the average attendance for the year was 115,427. The number on the roll, when the reports were given in, was 130,478, and total number on the roll, when the reports were given in, was 140,478 and the total number entered during the preceeding year was 149,751. Those conversant with schools, whether day-schools or Sabbath-schools, are aware that the number upon the roll is the best test of the attendance and so we have the very satisfactory fact upon this point that, in 1852, 140,478 children were receiving religious instruction in the Sabbath-schools of the Church. Further, it is stated by the Committee that it is their conviction that there are not more than 40 congregations belonging to their communion that have not availed themselves of this the best of all the agencies of the Church for the planting and rearing up in its members the seeds of Christian truth.

The Church has during the last eleven years had an increase of attendance upon its Sabbath-schools of nearly 5000 a year.

It is interesting to compare these returns with the returns of other Churches in Scotland engaged in this work. From the census statistics of 1851 we learn that the number upon the roll of the Free Church Sabbath-schools was 91,428. The United Presbyterian Church had at that time upon its roll 54,324. There was no detailed report to the Free Church Assembly last year upon this subject but a committee was instructed to report to the Assembly of 1863. The last return of which we have evidence in regard to the Free Church Sabbath-schools is in 1857, when the average attendance was 50,820. For that year the average attendance upon our schools was 95,824. The returns to the United Presbyterian Synod last year gave the attendance upon our schools as 71,535, and at ministers' Bibles-classes 20,614—total, 92,249. It is not stated in the report whether these are the numbers of average attendance the numbers on the roll, or the whole entered for the year. This, it will be seen from our own reports, will make a difference of several thousand. We may assume, however that they are the number on the roll. From the number reported there falls to be deducted the proportion for their schools in England and Ireland. In the United Presbyterian denomination there are 542 charges; of these 80 are not in Scotland. If we make, then the required deduction for them, there remain 78,633 receiving Sabbath-school instruction from the United Presbyterian

Church. It is thus gratifying to know that, while other Churches are doing their part in this eminently Christian educational enterprise, the Church of Scotland—as is due from its numbers, its influence—is taking the lead in our country in this great work.

The first feature of Sabbath-schools for which we claim, from all who can give them sympathy and support, is that they are and should be within each congregation a model Christian organization. They combine at once advantages and characteristics of the Christian family and the Christian Church. They have the personal instruction and the pastoral supervision and ministrations of the other. A rightly-organized, well-taught Sabbath-school is at once an enlarged Christian family and a miniature Christian Church. There is an opportunity presented by it, such as is afforded by no other part of congregational work, of showing what a social Christian organization should be. The kindly influence of minister and teacher, the precious vital truths of the divine Spirit, the discipline of affection that rules in a Sabbath-school—all these—the best and highest characteristics of a true Christian organization—may be exemplified in a Sabbath-school as is scarcely now to be seen in any other of our modern institutions. From every one who desires to see Christian hearts succeed in the effort to diffuse, in our social system, Christian intelligence—to bind the community by the sweet and blissful ties of Christian sympathy, and centre youthful aspiration upon heaven and Christ and God—Sabbath-schools should receive countenance and help. They possess all the best characteristics of what is good and true in our times; and every one who loves his country and his God, and desires the success of what will advance amongst us national piety and Christian truth, may, with fervour and with faith, raise to the throne of grace the prayer—May God bless and prosper our Sabbath-schools!

But further, we claim support for our Sabbath-schools as the true nurseries of the Church. It is now a fact confirmed beyond dispute, that from our Sabbath-schools we draw our best ministers' classes; from our ministers' classes we draw our best Sabbath-school teachers; and from our Sabbath-school teachers' and ministers' classes there come those whom every minister has most pleasure and confidence in admitting to the membership of the Church. Further, there are none in any congregation whom a minister finds more ready to co-operate with him in the achievement of any good Christian work than his Sabbath-school teachers, and those whom he has trained and helped and taught on through the advancing stages of a Sabbath Christian education. If, then the membership of our Church is to be supplied with tributary streams, we must guard and guide the fountains that shall feed it.—*H. & F. Record.*